

PR
6005
C8925s



SEA SONGS

AND OTHER

VERSES

BY
LORD EDWARD C. CROFTWELL

R.N.



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Alexander Macrae

1932



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

SEA SONGS

And other Verses

BY

LIEUT. EDWARD C. CRUTTWELL, R.N.

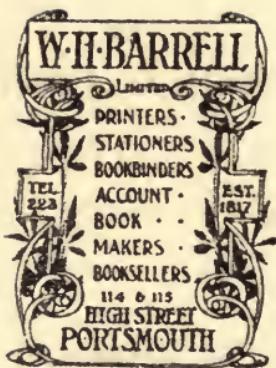


LONDON :

Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd., 32 Paternoster Row, E.C.

PORTSMOUTH :

W. H. Barrell, Ltd., 114 High Street.



PR
6005
C 8925 s

Several of these Poems have appeared in the
"Naval and Military Record," "The Fleet,"
"Malta Chronicle," "Bradfield College Chronicle"
and other magazines, to whose Editors I am
indebted for permission to reprint.



960654

CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Sea and the Sailor	1
The Destroyer	2
Dawn in the Red Sea	4
The Galleons of Spain	5
The Derelict—A Sailor's Yarn	8
Trafalgar and To-day—A Dream	15
Borne silent on the bosom of the stream	19
Love, Life, and Death	20
Life's Roadway	21
You, who have loved the Sea	23
Understanding	24
Life's Pilgrimage	28
La Belle Jaune Giroflée	30
A Dream of Valetta at Dawn	40
Friendship	42
The Knight who knew no fear	44
Kisses Three	54
A Battleship—Built and Building	57
Oh ! White Sails upon the River	61
A Cornish Knight	62
Youth and Age	65
A Woman's Battle	66
A Triolet	68

	<i>Page</i>
The Death-bed	69
Earth's Pilgrims	70
A Woman	74
Life numbers its years	75
Unrequited Love	76
There is a garden in her face	78
A White Rose or a Red one	80
In Argument	81
A Little Thing was Death	83
The Dying Year	84
Drunk with the Wine of Life	85
Sunset	86
When I shall die, my dear	87
L'envoi	88





The Sea and the Sailor.

“ What will you give to me,
Calm, blue, sea ? ”

O, I will carry thee over the foam,
And safe in my keeping thou may’st roam,
So shalt thou find in me a home,
O Sailor.

“ What will you give to me,
Cold, deep, sea ? ”

O, I will bury thee ’neath my wave,
For mine is the power to drown or save,
So shalt thou find in me a grave,
O Sailor.

The Destroyer.

To the call of a sea-borne people,
Girt with a coast-wise shore,
The soul of a Master workman
Fashioned a thing of war ;
That whenever a harnessed nation
Should proffer the gage of mail,
They might find in the swift Destroyer
A bulwark of avail.

He modelled the throbbing engine
With the touch of a craftsman's skill ;
He moulded the flush, skin-plating,
To the bid of his Master will ;
And he loosed the grim Destroyer—
Queen of the scudding seas—
As a menace, courting warfare,
And a harbinger of peace.

So ye that have braved the ocean
And delved in her boundless breast,
Her bosom of wave-swept billows
And the haven-lull of rest ;
Go, seek in the toiling dockyards,
Go, learn from the grey sea-void
How the power of the pulsing Destroyer
Is the pulse of the powerless destroyed.



Dawn in the Red Sea.

Night, like a velvet carpet burning with points
of gold,
Shrouded the far horizon deep in its cavernous
fold ;
Till, like a flashing scimitar, leaving its trail
of red,
The sky was streaked with crimson, and the
tropic night was dead.

A moment and all was darkness, another and all
was light,
And the blinding ball of crimson smiled from
its giddy height,
Where a silent land beneath it gasped in the
crushing heat,
And a waste of tideless ocean lay stagnant at
its feet.

The Galleons of Spain.

Sir Francis rode at Falmouth
With seven sail o' the line ;
With seven sail o' the line, he lay,
Newly rigged from yard to tree,
And he slipped at night from Falmouth Bay,
And rounded out to sea.

He had shaped his course to the Sou' Sou'
East,
Some four score knots by the log ;
Some four score knots by the log he ran,
With a fig for his Catholic Majesty's ban,
And he headed his nose for shore again,
To " singe the beard of the King of Spain."

Right under the guns of Cadiz town
He ran with his canvas spread,
Till he was aware of a galleon there
Fresh from the builders' shed ;

So down he swooped with his gallant ships,
And riddled her timbers through :

“ May the Devil take,”
Quoth Francis Drake,
“ Each Don i’ her scurvy crew.”

And he poured his broadside into the town,
And he raked the forts with grape,
He boarded and burnt each galleon there,
Save only four as the victor’s share,
(And he laughed to see the blood-red glare
Running astreak the evening sky.)

A present meet
To lay at the feet
Of his Queen at Tilbury.

So he and his seven ships sailed North,
Back he sped with his gallant seven ;
Eight o’ the line had sailed away,
But twelve rode proudly now i’ the bay :
Prizes o’ war, as England’s fee,
To swell the strength of the Queen’s Navee,
And the hearts of the lads o’ Devon.

Sir Francis hied to Tilbury,
Where the Queen lay with her court,
And she feasted her eyes, in mute surprise,
On the trophies he had brought :
“Lady,” he said, “if these baubles please,
Take them as England’s gain ;

“But the Devil take,”
Quoth Francis Drake,
“The Galleons of Spain.”





The Derelict.

(A Sailor's Yarn.)

The Captain stood on the quarter-deck,
 And laughed at the rising gale :
 " Devil a sign of a wreck," quoth he,
 " Never a floatin' spar alee,
 " Nor a shred of a parted sail.

" Forty years," he growled in his beard,
 " Sailin' along the coast,
 " Man an' boy I have steered," quoth he,
 " Schooner an' brig an' barque at sea,
 " With a score o' hands to boast.

" Never a lubber to lend a hand
 " Has shipped in a crew o' mine :
 " Bluff and hearty an' tanned," quoth he,
 " Sailormen all that sail with me,
 " Drunk with the taste o' brine.

“ Give me a man to beat a course
“ To windward in a storm,
“ With topsails double-reefed,” quoth he,
“ Surf ahead and the land alee,
“ An’ grog for to keep him warm.

“ Them that goes for a life afloat
“ Never can bide ashore :
“ A seaman’s home’s his boat,” quoth he,
“ An’ his wit his livelihood may be,
“ An’ he asks for nothin’ more !

“ Durned if I know how a sailorman
“ Can leave if his ship go down,
“ A fair-weather sailor can,” quoth he,
“ For he’s durned if he knows why he came
to sea,
“ But he knows that it weren’t to drown.

“ I’m a good hard-swearin’ man, they say,
“ But I deals a bit in pride,
“ And I’d sink with my ship to-day,” quoth he
“ An’ lie as snug in my grave at sea,
“ As ashore by my mother’s side.

“ My mother, she died in a longshore bed,
“ My father, afloat he died,
“ He hadn’t no use for the dead,” quoth he,
“ But he hadn’t no use for a life at sea
“ With his ship below the tide.

“ But yesternight, when I slipped my berth,
“ The owner, he watched me go :
“ If there be a skipper on earth,” quoth he,
“ That can handle his vessel better ’n ye,
“ Cap’en, I’ll let ye know !

“ For I wants you to sail to the Nor’-Nor’-West
“ Tackin’ as best ye may,
“ Till ye sight on a billow-crest,” quoth he,
“ A derelict schooner, running free,
“ Headin’ across the bay.

“ An’ I puts me faith in your mate and you,
“ For I knows if its calm or swell,
“ Whatever you reckon to do,” quoth he,
“ I’ll lay a skiff to a salvage,
“ Cap’en, you’ll do it well.

" An' here I stands and I sees you go,
 " Pickin' yer way outside,
 " An' I says that I wants in tow," quoth he,
 " A derelict ship 'longside this quay
 " At the slack o' the mornin's tide."

* * * *

The Captain raised his hand from his lip,
 To see where the wind might blow :
 " Devil a crewless ship," quoth he,
 " Nor a bare yardarm as a man can see,
 " With the spray like cuttin' snow."

Long he looked to the Nor'-Nor'-West,
 His eye on a far-off speck,
 " I'm thinkin' the Lord knows best," quoth he,
 " But I knows a ship in distress at sea,
 " An' I reckon that's the wreck."

And the Captain laughed in his grizzled beard,
 Laughed at the threshing gale :
 " Better 'n what I feared," quoth he,—
 " Waterlogged, driftin' fast alee,
 " A derelict under sail.

“ Men,” he cried to the sailors aft,
 “ I’ve got no use for the tongue,
 “ But I wants each mother’s son,” quoth he,
 “ To board that ship along wi’ me,
 “ When you hears that watch-bell rung.”

And he brought his vessel head to wind,
 With his eye to the flapping sail,
 And he turned to the Bos’un : “ Mate,” quoth
 he,
 “ Though I’ve scant hope of Eternity,
 “ You’re Capt’en if I fail !

 “ For I means to board this mateless craft,
 “ An’ tow her safe inshore ;
 “ For I haven’t no use ” (and he laughed),
 quoth he,
 “ For a wanderin’ barque, an’ its up to me
 “ To return the same to store.

“ I’ve cursed her Capt’en beneath me breath,
 “ That left his tub of a boat,
 “ An’ I prays for a craven death,” quoth he,
 “ If ever I leaves my ship at sea,
 “ Though her timbers scorn to float.”

And he gruffly shook the mate by the hand,
 And he raised his fist to the bell,
 Striking a peal of three times three,
 As he ranged his ship beneath her lee
 As the derelict topped the swell.

Each mother's son stood by the side,
 Straining to leap aboard :
 "I'm loth, twixt wind and tide," quoth he,
 "To break the oath that I swear to ye,
 "An' me life's in the hand o' the Lord."

* * * *

Far he leapt as the ship swept by,
 Clutched at her stays and fell :
 "I haven't no use for to die," laughed he,
 "But I thanks my stars that my grave's the
 sea,
 "An' me pillow's the salt sea swell."

And the derelict ship swept on and on,
 Driven before the gale ;
 "The Capt'en's gone," the mate quoth he,
 "An' he lies 'neath fathoms three times three,
 "Where he's got no use for a sail.

“ It comes to me, mind, that he chose his doom

“ Less than an hour ago :

“ May I find a berth in a tomb,” quoth he,

“ If ever I leaves a ship at sea,

“ Though she sinks to the depths below.

“ An’ he says, says he, ‘ If I fail this day,

“ ‘ You’re Capt’en in my stead ’ ;

“ An’ he’s left his ship afloat at sea,

“ An’ its up to you an’ its up to me

“ To honour the name of the dead.

“ For a good hard-swearin’ man was he,

“ But he dealt a bit in pride,

“ An’ I thinks for the likes o’ me an’ you

“ He was better ’n what we mostwise knew,

“ An’ he proved it when he died.

“ So its bustle an’ trim the sails, me lads,

“ An’ turn her nose for home ;

“ For the derelict’s taken a rock ashore,

“ An’ the Capt’en’s snug on the salt sea floor,

“ An’ his tomb’s a waste o’ foam.”



Trafalgar and To-day.

A DREAM.

I dreamed a dream : I wandered by the sea,
Whither I knew not, save that I must go
Ever and ever unresistingly,

Lone, with the waves monotonous outflow ;
And as I paced along the sandy brim
Shelving to seaward with the ebbing tide,
Methought a cloud-girt island, mystic, dim,
Sprang into being by the water-side.

Gazing, I stood in silent wondering :
Was this a phantom of some distant isle ?
Or some dim mirage, on whose vanishing

I should see all as I had seen erstwhile ?
But no, no fleeting phantom this, it stood
Sprung from the Vast Infinitude of Space :
Upon its crags a spirit seemed to brood,
Some restless wraith here found a resting-place

I nearer drew, and o'er the broad expanse
Of shimmering water a deep silence fell,
Ev'n the echoes ceased their resonance,
The very water ceased to rise and swell.
And then—a voice as of a silver lyre
Seemed to ring out across the tracts of sea :
And seated on a crag, his eye afire,
The shade of Nelson throned in majesty
I saw ; and as I gazed the scene
Partly dissolved, and now to me it seemed
As though the glories of the What Has Been
Commingled with the glories of What Now Is,
streamed
Into my view, a grand and great cortège :
Ship upon ship, a long unending line—
A naval pageantry of bygone age—
Wov'n with the present in some close combine.
I looked : the ships bore on with graceful pace,
Their bellying sails white in the misty sky ;
I saw the crowding sailors, and could trace
The letters on the stern—the “ VICTORY.”
And then the voice rang out and I could hear
The words the phantom figure seemed to say,
High-seated on the crag (and soft and clear
I heard the piping wind and saw the spray
Dart from the blunted bows) :

“ So I behold you once more, gallant ship,

 My “ VICTORY ” : I would we sailed again
In that long chase in which we did outstrip

 Brave Villeneuve and his squadron in the Main
Or would again we braved bold Denmark’s pride,

 Or sailed victorious from Aboukir Bay.

Ah me ! that once again my fleet should ride

 As at Trafalgar and refight the day.

I see thee, too, my “ TRIUMPH,” and methinks

 That far astern my “ AGAMEMNON ” looms,
And brave St. Vincent in the “ VANGUARD ”
 slinks

Past me, hard-noticed in the gathering glooms.
And ye, too, heroes of a hundred fights,

 My brother Captains, NELSON bids you
 ‘ Hail.’

And ye fond vessels, towers of Britain’s might,

 Launched since I sped, strong bulwarks of
 Avail.

But what is this ? A monster cased in steel,

 A vast “ Leviathan,” ungainly, grey,

A behemoth (whose very looks reveal

 Perfected genius of a Latter Day),

Cumbrous and *sans* grace and driv’n by steam,

 But fast withal and great in armament,

(To me appearing like some shadowy dream,

 That flits one moment e’er again ’tis sent

Into the Infinite) ; but still I see unfurled,
 As in my ships, the emblem of our might—
 The Ensign, stretching o'er the world ;
 Keeping our scutcheon spotless, clean, and
 bright.

I see, I see, the spirit of my men
 Unaltered rests : though times indeed may
 change,

Honour, deep-rooted, grows ——”
 A stillness strange

Passed o'er the air, the East turned slowly grey,
 And slowly too the phantom island merged
 Into the ocean and dissolved away ;

And loud once more the flowing tide-waves
 surged,

Lapping the shelving brim—and I awoke :
 And long I heard the echo of that dream so
 strange :

“ I see, I see, the spirit of my men remains,
 The times indeed may change.”



Song.

Borne silent on the bosom of the stream,
The wanton night-airs playing through her
hair,
She glided like the vision of a dream,
 Too fair.

A pall of samite thrown across her form,
A pillow crushed beneath her weary head,
In state until the coming of the dawn
 She sped.

In solemn solitude the sombre barge
The night long rose upon the river's breast,
And crossed at morn, unseen, the golden marge
 Of rest

And reverently they raised the tired head,
And chafed the slender hand and kissed the
face,
And showed her in the Island of the Dead
 Her place.

Love, Life, and Death.

Life is a ring of melody,
The lilt of a well-loved song,
And he who has learned the music
Sings both loud and long.

Love is a golden lyre,
The echo of fairy strings,
To the soul a distant murmur
Of the Infinite in things.

Death is the long-for pilot,
The steersman of unknown seas,
And he that is wise will close his eyes
And drift to the welcome breeze.

Life's Roadway.

At break of dawn, in a dim-lit room,
 A sleeping infant lay,
 The mother kissed it in the gloom,
 And raised her hands to pray ;
 So loud the sweet-toned church bells rang,
 So resonant it seemed they sang :
 That swift and strong
 They bore along
 A song
 That natal day.

At noon within a minster's wall
 A white-robed maiden stands,
 She recks not how the posies fall,
 Scattered by loving hands ;
 So swift she hears the measured beat
 Of minster bells, so clear, so sweet,
 With eyes above
 She speeds, her love
 To greet
 This wedding day.

At sunset on a winter's sea,
 Her husband at her side,
A woman's spirit wrestled free
 And fled adown the tide.
So slow they heard the ship-bell toll,
They knew not e'er the passing soul
 Had left an earth
 Of fading worth
 For birth
 In endless day.



Song.

You, who have loved the sea
As only a sailor can,
Sing me the witching melody
It wakes in the soul of Man ;
Sing of the eerie song
That heralds the threshing gale,
And the plaint that is borne along
To the filling of the sail.

You, who have known the sea
As only a sailor may,
Speak of the solemn melody
Whispered at close of day ;
Speak of the lands of sun,
Of the grass that is always green,
Tell of the prowess you have won
And the glories you have seen.

Ah, no ! it cannot be, I said,
Alas ! Romance is dead . . .

Understanding.

They found him by the forest pool,
Stretched on a bed of moss,
Fanned by the wanton air so cool
Strewing the leaves across ;
His lifeless form and battered face
Smoothing his resting place.

A priest had lain a cloth upon
The face that looked on none could know,
He lit the tapers feebly wan
And chanted soft and low ;
While I stood by his resting-place,
And looking, knew his face.

Some knights-at-arms around him stood
And cleansed the blood away :
“ A noble type of knightlihood,
God grant him rest,” said they ;
And I stepped back a pace behind,
And smiled to see Death kind.

A lady's token on his helm,
A little thing of red,
A bauble that upset a realm
And broke a crownèd head—
And told me what no lips could tell,
Why he had fought and fell.

I seemed to see him on his knee,
Bending before a throne,
Led with unblushing gallantry
To steal another's own ;
With lying words and craven heart
To practice his black art.

A second Lancelot he seemed,
I saw him ambling by,
While ever on his harness gleamed
The sun from out a sky,
That seemed ironically to smile
To see a thing so vile.

And pilioned on a palfrey rode
Beside him tall and fair,
This royal flower of womanhood,
A second Guinevere ;
And sideways from his vizored head
Her favour fluttered red.

I saw him in an open place,
 Against him stood his king,
 The fear of Death was on his face,
 He seemed a sorry thing ;
 And now and then he smote amain,
 But feebly as in pain.

I seemed to see him on his knee,
 Bending before a throne,
 A spawn of misnamed chivalry,
 Yielding, what was his own,
 The life blood of a tainted heart
 That played a craven part.

And now he lay within the wood,
 Found by his fellow men,
 And none but I that understood
 And spurned and cursed him then ;
 I saw them with uncovered head,
 And heard the words they said.

And one had brushed the leaves away,
 And one had staunched the wound,
 The priest was on his knees to pray
 That pardon might be found
 For him in aught that he had erred
 From knightly deed or knightly word.

They buried him where death had come,
They laid him gently in the earth,
Who wrapped him softly in her womb,
She, who unwitting, gave him birth :
(I only took the favour red
And placed it on my head.)

I wandered back alone, alone,
I held my peace, nor spake my fears,
And when again I sat my throne
I saw my lady's tears.
(I heard the wind blow from the wood,
Sighing : I think it understood).



Life's Pilgrimage.

The world is full of pilgrims : I am one,
Pressing for ever towards the distant shrine,
Halting awhile to bask beneath Life's Sun
And taste Life's Tempting Vine.

Each pilgrim rests awhile his weary feet
And lays aside awhile his helping staff,
He fills his goblet with Life's nectar sweet
He has so longed to quaff.

One moment : it is gone : the goblet stands
Empty and useless by his side once more,
And with a sigh, his staff between his hands,
He passes through the door :

And there outside he sees his brothers wait,
Each with his goblet, yearning for the wine,
He bids them turn and pass from out the gate,
Nor taste Life's Tempting Vine.

They heed him not, but one by one file in,
Fill to the brim and drain the deadly glass ;
Then with a sigh they rise and slowly win
From out the door to pass.

So, one by one, they creep from out the gate
Into Life's Street again and pass along,
Drifting unseen, unnoticed, to their fate,
Mingling among Life's Throng.

And some there are that steering through all
time
Adown the troublous stream of Life on earth
Arrive at length beside that distant shrine,
And prove its fabled worth.

And some there are that drifting far to sea,
Strike on the rock of Everlasting Woe,
And wrecked and helpless, unresistingly,
Are swept to depths below.





La Belle Jaune Giroflee.

The title of this poem is taken from "The Gillyflower of Gold,"
by William Morris.

I.

The Fairies Sing :

" Maid Rosalie, come down, come down,
Come join the Elfin-ring,
And dance with us and sing ;
Maid Rosalie, come down, come down,
For to-night we weave a færie-crown
To our gladsome carolling."

* * * *

And Rosalie the fair looked down
As she heard the fairies sing,
For their joyous song was borne along—
A break in the hush of evensong—

And she heard their carolling . . .
 And ever a voice within her said :
 " A færie-crown for a fairy head,
 Come dance, come sing, till the East
 turns grey,
 And banish every care away ;
 Ha ! Ha ! la belle jaune giroflée."

Dance and sing, sing and dance,
 And ever they weave the crown,
 Dance and sing, sing and dance,
 Till the wood is filled with the radiance
 Of sparkling gem and gown,
 And ever the East is turning grey,
 And still Maid Rosalie hears them say
 " A færie-crown for a fairy head,
 Haste, for the night will soon be fled,
 Haste, for we soon must hie away,
 Ha ! Ha ! la belle jaune giroflée."

* * * *

The night has fled, the dawn has come,
 Into their hidings one by one
 The fairies fly, and leave alone
 Maid Rosalie and the woven crown ;
 And blushing 'neath her eyes cast down

A little flower, its petals blown,
 In and out, then out and in,
 As though in time to the carolling
 Which the elves had ceased when the
 dawn turned grey.

Ha ! Ha ! la belle jaune giroflée.

* * * *

Most tenderly the fair maid stooped,
 And she plucked the golden flower,
 And never the op'ning petals drooped
 As she bore it to her bower :
 And crowned in the woven færie-crown
 Each night she would sit and watch and
 say :

“ Will the fairies come, ma giroflée ?
 For I long to dance and I long to sing,
 And to join in their gladsome carolling,
 Alas ! Ma belle jaune giroflée.” . . .

. . . But twilight dawned and night arrived
 And never the fairies met,
 And night by night Maid Rosalie
 Would sit, her eyelids wet
 With a tear that coursed down her paling
 cheek :

And ever the bloom would lift its head
 And seemed to speak, and the words it
 said :

“ A færie-crown you need no more seek,
 But a knight to love,
 And a prayer to pray,
 Ha ! Ha ! la belle jaune giroflée.”

Maid Rosalie hath doffed her robes and
 donned a samite gown,

Maid Rosalie hath donned a hood
 And doffed her færie-crown.

And she hath paced the country side,
 And made it known both far and wide
 That she will make a willing bride
 To a knight so pure, so brave, so good,
 To love her for nought but her woman-
 hood :

And ever her prayer went up on high,
 “ Lord, look on my virginity ;
 Grant me a love, sweet Lord, I pray—
 Amen, la belle jaune giroflée.”

II.

Alone in the dimming twilight
 By a cross, an armed knight kneeled ;
 Bold was his mien and his eye was bright,
 Though his mail was dinted in the fight,
 And his steed that had borne him till the night
 Lay dead on the battle-field.
 He rose from his knees, and turning,
 Glanced at the dying sun,
 And cried in his anguish burning,
 " Sweet Lord, what have I done ?
 Alone I stand and scathless,
 On the field my brethren lie,—
 Ah me ! that I could die !
 For I wot they deem me faithless
 To my vows of Chivalry."
 And ever there seemed a bell that pealed :
 " A mightier brand thou yet shalt yield,
 And in the strength of a love as strong
 As Death and all his dread array,
 These memories shall pass away."

Ha ! Ha ! la belle jaune giroflée.

* * * *

" Look out, look out, Maid Rosalie,
 A knight is passing by ;

Look out, look out, Maid Rosalie,
 A mass of flashing blazonry
 Will meet thy curious eye.”
 And Rosalie the Fair looked out
 And leaned from her ivy’d bower,
 And cried to the knight below,
 “ O whither, my knight, so fast away ?
 To a feast, I ween, for you seem so gay,—
 I pray you wear this giroflée
 In your helm where’er you go,”
 And she plucked the golden flower.

* * * *

“ And what is your name, fair maid,” said he,
 “ Whose token I must wear ? ”
 “ O, I am named Maid Rosalie,
 And men call me ‘ The Fair.’
 And you, sweet lord, pray tell to me,
 O tell me who art thou ? ”
 “ O, I am a Knight of Chivalrie,
 An errant Knight in a strange countree,
 Till I fulfil a vow :
 And men call me Sir Agravaine ! ”

“ And what of your vow, sweet lord,” said she,
 “ That binds you thus to errantry ? ”

Light down, light down, and climb this tower,
 And rest awhile in my trellised bower ! ”
 Then Agravaine bent down his gaze,
 Then glancing towards the sky :
 “ “Twas all for to seek a love,” he said,
 And then he heaved a sigh.
 And ever they heard a voice that said,
 “ A færie-crown for a fairy head,
 A færie ring on each fairy hand,
 A færie kiss and a færie wand,
 A long, long night and a dawning day ;
 Ha ! Ha ! la belle jaune giroflée.”

* * * *

O he has climbed to the topmost stair
 (Sir Agravaine and Rosalie) ;
 O he comes down from the topmost stair,
 And leads sweet Rosalie the Fair ;
 In her hair is twined the færie-crown,
 And the giroflée from his helm bends down,
 As they kiss so silently.

III.

The Fairies sing :

“ Maid Rosalie, come down, come down,
 Come join the elfin ring ;
 Sir Agravaine, come down, come down,
 For to-night we weave a færie-crown,
 To our gladsome carolling.”

And ever they heard a voice that said :
 “ A færie-crown for a fairy head,
 Come dance, come sing, till the East turns grey
 A long, long night and a dawning day ;
 Ha ! Ha ! la belle jaune giroflée.”

* * * *

And Rosalie the Fair looked down,
 As she heard the fairies sing,
 And clasped her lover by the hand,
 As together they danced with the fairy
 band,
 And joined in their carolling.

* * * *

Ever they danced and ever they sang,
 Till the East was turning grey,
 “ O, who will win the færie-crown,
 O, tell me, giroflée ? ”

And the golden flower raised its head,
 "O, what is life when love is dead ?
 O, what is love when life has fled ?
 O woe is me, la giroflée."

IV.

A white robed priest in a dim-lit room
 And a knight by a bedside stood,
 For a dying maid on the bed there lay,
 And ever she raised her hands to pray,
 But never a word she said.
 In the taper's glow the knight and priest
 Prayed for the passing soul :
 "O Jesu, King of Purity,
 O Holy Blessed Trinity,
 Have mercy on Maid Rosalie."—

And they raised her sleepy head . . .
 And Agravaine bent low, so low,
 And brushed a tear away,
 Then pressing a kiss on her clammy brow,
 "Sweet Rosalie, art happy now ?
 Sweet love, we meet some day."
 He smoothed her hair, he chafed her hands,
 And he gave a last caress,

He tried to smile, then turned away,
 And amidst his sobs they heard him say :
 “ Bring in the golden giroflée.”

* * * *

They brought his helm with the golden flower,
 And they placed it on the bed,
 They crowned her in her færie-crown,
 And they placed his on his head ;
 The priest held high the crucifix,
 And the last sad prayer was said . . .
 And Rosalie, sweet Rosalie, she gazed at
 Agravaine :

“ O true were the words of the voice we heard,
 And I know we shall meet again.

“ A færie-crown for each fairy head,
 A færie-ring on each fairy hand,
 A fairy kiss and a fairy wand,
 A long, long night and a dawning day.”

And the golden flower raised its head :
 “ O what is life when love is dead ?
 O what is love when life is fled ?
 O woe is me, la giroflée.”

* * * *

And the priest replied, “ Amen.”

*A Dream of Valetta
at Dawn.*

The sun in all his majesty looked down
In sudden splendour, through the filmy haze,
And showed me at my feet the sleeping town,
Like a ghost^T of bygone days.

* * * *

No footstep wove an echo on the road,
No homeless wanderer paced the empty street,
But everywhere a silence, as of God,
Fell like a pall complete.

When, of a sudden, like a chess-board game,
Players and pieces seemed to fill the scene ;
Like fairy elves in dreamland on they came,
Where nought before had been :

I saw the Knights resplendent in their mail
Return in triumph with some victor's prize,
While out to seaward flapped the painted sail,
Bearing their merchandise :

I heard the sound of hammer and of axe
Break on the air, where all before was still,
Where toiling slaves with swarthy straining
backs,
Worked to another's will.

And pageant-like, too beautiful to last,
Gallants in seamless lace and sombre dames
Flashed by me, and I heard them as they passed
Breathing each other's names.

And some there were who live in history still,
And some who lie at rest in unknown graves :
Some lie, unmourned, upon some gory hill,
And some beneath the waves.

But all have left some monument, unmarred
By countless ravages of Time and Tide ;
An heritage for Malta's sons to guard
In Honour and in Pride.



Friendship.

(Written in a lady's autograph album.)

When the fire of youth is kindled,
And Love is Beauty's right,
Many shall flock around you
Like moths to a candle light,
And a pledge so lightly taken,
Or a soft word dropped in fun,
Though naught to a host of hearers
May be All in All to one.

When the hand has lost its cunning,
And feebly beats the heart,
Slowly, as dreams that flit and pass,
Those we have loved depart ;
For this is the toll of friendship,
It lasts like the virgin snow,
Or the last sweet rose of summer,
That fades when the cold winds blow.

There shall be a day of reckoning,
Like the sorting of the grain,
And the price of friendship sifted
With its meed of joy or pain ;
When they who are best and truest
Shall stand as they stood of old,
Proud to have proved their metal,
Pure as a heart of gold.





The Knight who knew no fear.

My lady paced the castle court
 And watched the evening shadows fall,
 Till twilight as an after-thought
 Came and dispelled them all ;
 Her eyes she lowered on the ground,
 Her arms crossed on her breast,
 A cloak of silence spread around,
 A panoply of rest.

And still she paced the court and gazed
 Down at her weary feet,
 As though some vision wonder-mazed
 Her eyes—too bitter sweet
 It seemed ; for as her tiring-maid
 (More lovely than the day)
 Watched the soft shadows grow and fade,
 She heard her mistress say :

“ And will he never come to me ?
 And must I wait in vain ?
 Is life an open mockery,
 Where love can never reign ?
 Is he then faithless, doth he yield
 To any voice of sin ?
 Or does he ride afresh afield
 More laurels yet to win ? ” . . .

And I her little minstrel boy,
 Who nestled at her feet,
 Looked up and saw her smile a smile,
 So wan and yet so sweet,
 That I a little wondered
 What made my lady sad,
 So I unslung my little harp
 And sang to make her glad :

“ He came with the summer days,
 When the sun shone up on high,
 Together we wandered forest ways,
 Happily, happily ;
 He left with the winter snow,
 With the sun behind the hill,
 Alone I watched my gallant go,
 And alone I wander still.”

Slowly my lady ceased to sigh,
 And slowly bent her head,
 And I gazed in her beauty-laden eyes,
 And they were damp and red ;
 She passed her fingers through my curls
 And kissed my little brow,
 And "Sing to me again," she said,
 "I know he's loyal now" . . .

So I took my little harp again,
 And her maiden came anear,
 And she sang with me a wondrous tale
 Of a knight that knew no fear.
 And ever and ever as we sang,
 My lady touched my brow,
 And a tear would course down her ashen cheek
 As a pearl in a bed of snow :
 "Afar in a forest glade,
 Alone rode an errant knight,
 And the shadows 'gan to fade
 And the marsh-fires kindled bright ;
 Ever he rode alone
 Through the marshland dank and
 drear,
 Into the Vast Unknown,
 The Knight that knew no fear."

“ In a grass-grown castle court
 Stood the errant knight alone,
 At his feet the monster he had fought
 For the sake of a maid unknown.
 And he mounted and rode away
 Through the forest dank and drear,
 Into an Unknown Way,
 The Knight that knew no fear.

In a dim-lit hermitage
 Lay the unknown Knight alone,
 On his last long pilgrimage
 To the land of the All Unknown ;
 And he gazed on high and smiled
 As he wrenched from his side the
 spear,
 And lay like a sleeping child,
 The Knight that knew no fear.”

So I laid my harp aside,
 And I sought the maiden’s hand,
 And drew her a little space apart
 And watched my lady stand—
 Not with her head down-drooping,
 Not with a tearful eye,
 But as in rapture list’ning,
 Plunged in a reverie.

Twilight had waned and faded,
Lost in the gloom of night :
She stood as an angel spirit
Clad in a robe of white.

* * * *

My master paced the countryside
And watched the sun rise o'er the wold,
Till all the sky was glorified
With dove-eyed beams of gold.
He prayed a prayer and breathed a vow,
And rode upon his way,
Weary of heart and sad of brow,
In melancholy array.

Ever he rode unspeaking,
His head upon his breast,
As though in silence seeking
That great consoler—Rest.
Ever he rode unheeding,
Nor glanced before, behind,
As in oblivion feeding
A doubting fear-wracked mind.

And I, his faithful little squire,
 That rode with him to war,
 Watched him with longing, helpless, eyes
 And yearned to help him more ;
 So I unsheathed his polished sword
 I carried by my selle,
 And caught the sunbeams on the blade
 And sang a ritornelle :

“ Love of My Heart : to live,
 Ever thine own to be,
 Love of My Heart : I give
 All that is mine to thee ;
 Love of My Heart : to die,
 Buried in love with thee,
 Love of My Heart : to lie
 So, for Eternity.”

And my master raised his head
 And gazed at the beaming sun,
 And he loosed the jewelled reins,
 And spurred his warhorse on ;
 And I rode by his saddle breathless,
 As the hounds that chase the deer,
 While he spoke in a voice of ecstasy
 The words that I longed to hear :

“ Away from me, doubting fears,
 I know that my loved one’s true
 To her promise those long-past years,
 When I came in the spring to woo ;
 And now in the Autumn chill
 I come to receive my own,
 Fresh from the hands of Time,
 Nurtured ’neath Nature’s throne.”

And he rode away, away,
 Into the forest far,
 Lit by the paling ray,
 Led by the twinkling star ;
 He rode like a phantom knight,
 Through the marsh-land dank and drear,
 His brow suffused with light,
 The Knight that knew no fear.

* * * *

Through the cloister, dark and airy,
 Down the noiseless aisles of stone,
 Flitting like a restless fairy
 Fled a shrouded form alone ;
 Silent steps that never falter,
 Lips that scarcely seem to breathe,
 Hands uplifted to the altar,
 Breasts that barely seem to heave.

So, I saw in supplication
'Neath the stone wrought pillars quaint,
In her self-appointed station,
In a posture like a saint,—
Her, my lady, silent, praying,
With her sad eyes fixed above,
At the altar threshold laying
Reliques of a deathless love.

And I too stole adown the shadowed aisle,
Kneeling beside her with my eyes on high ;
And I too prayed, that in a little while
God would restore her loved one, joyfully.

So, we knelt on in silent rapture lost,
Cloaked with the gloom and shrouded with
the night,
Till through the aisle a silver sunbeam crossed,
And of a sudden all was bathed in light ;
And he, she prayed for, lingered there outside,
Smiling at her, with open outstretched
arms,
Seeming a vision of the morningtide,
Breathing of God and stored with Heaven's
charms.

And he cried, " My love, my love,
 I knew I should find you true
 To your promise in long-past years,
 When I came in the spring to woo ;
 And now in the autumn chill
 I come to receive my own,
 Fresh from the virgin altar,
 Fresh from the convent throne."

" Love of my soul," she cried,
 " When you came in the spring to woo,
 Little you recked of the summer heat,
 Or the cold, cold winds that blew ;
 Love of my heart," she sighed,
 " Always thine own to be,
 To drift in the ceaseless tide
 To the sea of Eternity."

And I touched my little harp,
 And her maiden drew anear,
 And we sang of a virgin maid
 And a Knight that knew no fear . . .
 Ever we sang and sang,
 Till the sun had ceased to rise,
 And the very convent rang
 With our sweet toned harmonies ;

And the page unsheathed the sword
And swung it o'er his head,
And sang of a plighted word,
Of a love beyond the dead ;
Till the robed monks filed in
And blessed them standing there,
The Maid who knew no sin
And the Knight who knew no fear.





Kisses Three.

*“For a thing of infinite pathos, love, and daring,
list to a song of the sea.”*

A gallant stood at break of day
On the golden sand of the rippy bay,
Where silently a frigate lay
At anchor in the tide ;
He recked not where the sunbeams fell
Like golden dust on the ocean swell,
The heaving vessel’s tolling bell
Re-echoed as he cried :
O it’s well for a man to live and die,
And it’s well for to love a maid ;
So here’s to the vessel and the crew,
And right good luck to the man in blue,
Who wears the golden braid.”

A maiden sat at break of day
 At a casement, gazing o'er the bay ;
 She marked the frigate where it lay
 At anchor in the tide ;
 She recked not how the spindrift rose,
 And swept the ship like scudding snows,
 (Nor where the angry water flows
 Around the polished side) :
 "Here's luck," quoth she, "to the gallant
 crew,
 That sail my dear-heart o'er the blue,
 From the love of his plighted maid ;
 Oh take from my heart these kisses three,
 A kiss for me and a kiss for thee,
 And a kiss for the golden braid."

* * * *

A year had passed and he sailed again
 To the golden bay, from the Spanish Main ;
 Far over the summer seas he came
 To welcome her ashore.
 He recked not how the folks did stand,
 And throng and grasp him by the hand—
 They called him "Saviour of the Land,"
 And "Hero of the War."

She came and nestled to his side,
And laid her cheek to his and sighed—
Afar in battle with the tide
The frigate wrestled free.

“ Oh, it’s well for a man to live,” he said,
“ And it’s well for to love a winsome maid,”
And he gave her kisses three :
“ There one,” quoth he, “ from me to you,
And one for the gallant man in blue,
And one for the golden braid.”



A Battleship built and building.

“The Fleet of England is her All in All.”

Day by day and night by night
The sweating, tired, shipwrights toiled,
The shadows fled the morning light,
And still the ceaseless hammer fell
Monotonous like some steeple bell,
Or like a watch-buoy far at sea,
That shrieks its warning mournfully,
And flings it echoing to the ear
Of anxious seamen, water-soiled,
Who smile its note to hear.

So, too, the carpenters worked on
In eagerness, they knew not why,
Each day would see some proud tree gone
To join its forest fellows ranks,
Shaped ruthlessly in beams and planks,
Till riveted and holed and drilled,
Some empty spacing should be filled ;

And shape and symmetry and grace
Seemed suddenly from nothing born,
To shadow all the place.

Day in, day out, would slowly swell
The vast proportions of her lines,
A movement scarce perceptible,
Yet ever onward, plate by plate,
Like some stupendous work of fate
Evolving through each pulsing hour
From men, who felt some master-power
Which drove them blindly to a task
That spoke their progress with sure signs,
Nor bade them pause to ask.

Timber on timber, spar on spar,
They ribbed her and they paved her deck ;
They moulded from each shapeless bar
The finest skin of tempered steel ;
Till in her frame one seemed to feel
Almost the throbbing pulse of life,
As one in whom the surgeon's knife
Loosens some nerve or deadened chord,
Till through his veins an inert wreck
Feels new elixir poured.

What time the labourers and builders slaved,
 More workmen built a slipway to the sea,
 That she might tread the path her sisters
 braved

So often and in safety to the home
 That kissed the shipyard with its lips of foam,
 And took to its broad bosom all the spoil,
 The wonder-product of the months of toil,
 Which in a strong embrace it quickly bore
 From land to land in silent majesty,
 And then returned for more.

So weeks and days were merged within the
 past,

And each succeeding brought its finished share
 Until the toll of labour was at last
 Exacted to its fulness now complete ;
 And slowly homeward dragged the wearied
 feet,

Back-bent and brow-beat to some squalid door
 —For they were instruments of Fate, no more.
 And so they murmured, where before they
 sang,

Reaping a harvesting of needless care
 Where they had known no pang.

Within the yard now fell no hammer stroke,
The groaning of the cranes was heard no more,
But from a thousand straining seamen broke
Full-throated shouts of welcome on the air,
And floated down the trestleway, to where
The idle waters lapped the shelving ledge,
Circling in frothing eddies to the edge ;
Where from the mast the ensign waved aloft,
Vaunting its challenge to what hostile shore
Should, seeing, yet have scoffed.

And I that saw her glide so gracefully
(It seemed the launching of some fairy boat),
Felt the strong fascination of the sea,
The stirring call to guard our coastwise land,
And learn what sort of men were they who
manned
Leviathans like this, whose very breath
Speaks with the devastating voice of Death,
Where British warships float.

Song.

Oh, white sails upon the river,
 When you reach the open sea,
 Will you wander on for ever
 Or will you return to me ?

I have watched you slowly winding
 Where the shadowed pools are deep,
 While the tears my eyes are blinding,
 Heavy are my lids with sleep :

I have watched the helmsman guide you
 Safe past where each shallow lies,
 Where the trailing willows hide you
 From my anxious, peering eyes.

All I love in life you carry
 In your bosom to the main,
 Mary Mother ! do not tarry,
 Swift return to me again.

When you win adown the river,
 When you breast the open sea,
 Oh, remember me for ever,
 As I shall remember thee.



A Cornish Knight.

(“A Cornish Knight is ever held of little repute.”)
 (Old Saying.)

Amid the languor of the noon-tide sun,
 The sunbeams slanting fell between the trees,
 Piercing the leafy glades with aisles of light,
 That flung their blossoms riotous in the breeze,
 So that the damosels of Arthur’s court
 Laughed as the wind-tossed off’rings kissed
 a face,
 Or found some maiden’s bosom, or the grass
 A fitting haven for its resting place.

And as afar I saw the blazonry
 Of knight and noble and of squire agleam,
 And heard the laughter ripple down the wind
 In echo to the murmur of the stream . . .
 And she, my lady, at whose feet I lay,
 Rose of a sudden, fleeing down the glade,

Plucking a lily as she sped, and sighed,
 "Guard thee, thy petals that they do not
 fade,"
 And sought her knight from out the press of men,
 Pinning the token to his mail-clad breast,
 Hanging her favour 'neath his waving helm,
 Where oft in summer days her lips had pressed.

. . . His shield was blazoned, so that all men
 smiled
 (A quaint device of Cornwall, picked in white),
 And on his breast a lily, woven red,
 His war-horse and his trappings black as night.
 . . . And high above the plesaunce, clad in mail,
 Sat Arthur and the nobles of his train,
 Bidding the heralds let the tourney start
 With combat between Lancelot and Gawain.

So we, the damsels, left the leafy bank
 And strained to see the tilting 'mid the press,
 Laughing to claim Sir Lancelot vanquisher
 Of all the chivalry in Lyonesse . . .
 Anon my lady's knight from out the lists,
 Preceded by a herald, took his place,
 And flung his lance aloft and raised his helm,
 Smiling a lover's smile into her face.

And Arthur mazed to see so large a man,
Who hid his name and rank from prying eyes,
And wore a lady's favour on his breast,
All covered in a Cornish knight's disguise.
So well he sat his war-horse and so firm,
That many speechless gazed on one so tall,
Who bowed in mocking to the cry that rose,
"A Cornish knight is ever counted small."

And Lancelot took his stand upon the field,
Riding like thunder at the unknown knight,
And fell, unhorsed and vanquished to the dust,
His great lance Ron all shivered in the fight.
And silently the Cornishman looked down,
And turned his horse's head and rode away,
Sparing his steed not through the livelong night
Until he reached his castle door by day ;
Where stood my lady, who had fled the field,
And fared with me through many a forest
glade,
To welcome him and take from off his breast
The lily that has never thought to fade :
Breathing her loved one's name upon the night,
Crushing her favour to her clinging dress,
Hearing the echo flung adown the winds,
"Sir Tristram, Cornish knight, of Lyonesse."

Youth and Age.

“ O to be old,” one cried,
 “ When the fret of life is done,
 To drift in a ceaseless tide,
 To a slowly setting sun ;
 For the trouble of life is o’er,
 And all is a sinless dream
 Of a far (yet ever nearing) shore
 In the path of that noiseless stream.”

But an old man raised his head,
 And “ O to be young,” he cried ;
 “ With the consciousness of words unsaid
 And of deeds unjustified ;
 When the trouble of life is new
 And the fret of life unknown,
 For the ‘ roses of youth ’ are all too few,
 And the sins we in age atone.”

A Woman's Battle.

From love's low whisper carelessly she turned,
And held her head, tip-tilted, like a child ;
Half anger and half sorrow in her burned,
But bravely still she smiled.

She bore unconsciously upon her face
The imprint of some secret hidden shame,
The haunting memory of some disgrace
That darkened her fair name.

Her lot was but the price of womanhood,
Outraged and then forsaken for a whim,
To bear alone the penalty of good
That once had stooped to sin.

And now her little one, her passion-flower,
Had withered like some blighted bud and died,
Leaving the mother lone to tell each hour
That bore her down life's tide.

But ever on she wanly smiling went,
Closing the locket of her bursting breast,
Looking on all the pain that God had sent
As toil before a rest.

No more she knew the meaning of love's voice,
It woke no answering echo in her heart ;
She heard him, passionate, pleading for her
choice,
But dully and in part.

So, smiling still, all carelessly she turned,
And paced her weary way alone through life ;
Part sorrow and part anger in her burned,
And part the lust of strife.



A Triolet.

If I forgive thee, shall I learn
That love grows stronger with forgiving ?
Should so it be, wilt thou return,
If I forgive thee ? Shall I learn
That the pure love for which I yearn
Has made my lonely life worth living ?
If I forgive thee, shall I learn
That love grows stronger with forgiving ?

The Death-bed.

And we for three long weary weeks had prayed
Beside the snowy bed, and still she slumbered;
And ever Death, the Stern Avenger, stayed
His outstretched hand, and the world
wondered.

And we re-hoped anew, for life is dear,
While evermore she sleeping smiled and wept,
Her face illumined with a nameless fear,
That came and left her as she listless slept.

And of a sudden, one soft morn, she spoke,
Op'ning her arms as though to welcome death,
Who drew her to his bosom, and she woke,
To feel the strange out-gathering of her breath.

Earth's Pilgrims.

Singers are we, sweet singers, yet our strain
Is not so full of yearning as of joy,
Thy wild delightful music stirs again
I know not what of passion, purified
In fulness of its Being, though denied
 Unable to destroy.

And we, dear Mother, as thy sons must do,
Have lived and hoped and lost as thou hast
 done,
Against all counsel have we helped to strew
A smooth and easy path with briar and thorn,
To follow it unerring to the dawn
 Of some unearthly Sun.

So now that we are garnering the grain
Of harvest days that ripened to our breath,
Shall we, reviling, turn to thee again
And taunt you for our dallying by the way,
As who should seek his mother's knee and say,
 "We knew not here was Death."

Smile on, dear mother, for you cannot save
Each offspring that has clung upon your breast
Some must go down in silence to the grave,
And some of kinship and of honour proud
Must bend before the yoke where all have
bowed,
And seek an early rest.

The order changeth and we sing anew,
With certainty of things that were unknown,
For then your first-born found, amaze, a few
Making the same long sojourn in a Land
Which none with sureness could outstretch
their hand
And claim it to their own.

Again the order changeth, and our cry
No longer echoes on a wondering ear,
The brother sees no more an anxious eye,
But certainty that he will reach the shore,
And clasp you to his throbbing breast once
more,
Without a parting tear.

But they, dear Mother, whom you sent of old
 Ill clad and ill provided for the way,
 Plunged headlong through the darkness and
 the cold,
 And fought their road to sunshine and to
 light,
 To fall or vanquish in the unequal fight,
 Unmourned by night or day.

And they have built a ladder for our feet,
 Each step all pregnant with a sense of strife,
 And ours is but to follow and complete
 The well-worn stairway to the topmost rung,
 Where those that make their pilgrimage have
 sung
 Of all they loved in life.

And shall not we, with knowledge, yearn no
 more,
 But trudge undaunted on the road they trod,
 That leads unerring to the golden shore
 That we call Heaven ; and that others call
 By divers names and sundry, but they all
 Own it the realm of God.

Dear Mother, is not God within us now ?
We see Him in the op'ning of a flower,
We feel His presence in a plighted vow,
His breath is in the calm and in the storm,
Response in Nature but outlines His form
And cries aloud His power.

Singers are we, proud singers, yet our strain
Is not so much of yearning as of joy,
For, Mother, thou hast taught us the refrain
And schooled us in the lore our brothers sought
And wrapt us in the certainty they brought,
Which nothing can destroy.



A Woman.

God, in the dawn of Time,
 From the embryo of dust,
 In the likeness of His form divine
 Modelled a mortal bust.
 Fashioned it, breathed upon it,
 And saw that His work was good :
 Loosed it, pulsating on the earth—
 A mortal child of immortal birth—
 In primal womanhood.

And the daughter that God had formed
 From the mute, insensate, space,
 With the fire of quenchless passion warmed,
 Bequeathed to the human race ;
 Something of God's conception
 Planned in the heights above ;
 Beauty of thought and doing,
 Virtue, and wrong subduing,
 Purity, Faith, and Love.

Song.

“A name at death passes into oblivion, but deeds, for good or evil, leave a mark on posterity.”

Life numbers its years
Like the bud of a rose,
At even it opens
At day-break it blows,
The petals are caught
To the breast of the wind,
But the scent that they scattered
Still lingers behind.

So Nature and Life
Draw their meshes the same,
One buries a petal
The other a name :
But the fruits of Life's labour
Live on in stray seeds,
That deathlessly blossom
Extolling past deeds.



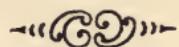
Unrequited Love.

He loved, and his passion ebbed away
 In quest of an empty dream,
 And they watched him weaken day by day,
 And they watched his life outstream ;
 But no one spoke the helping word,
 Nor eased the broken soul :
 (For love unfed is the sharpest sword,
 And Death is the only Toll).

He loved, and his passion ebbed away
 In quest of an upturned face ;
 He sighed for a glance of yesterday,
 And he breathed of a wealth of grace.
 But no one whispered his loved one's name,
 Nor spoke of her love for him :
 (She had drained the cup of the Goddess FAME,
 And the cup was filled to the brim).

He loved, and his passion ebbed away
 In quest of a heartless jade,
 He heard them speak in a far-off way
 Of a love that cannot fade ;
 And he smiled to himself a sad sweet smile,
 And dreamed that she still would come,
 Though he watched and prayed a long, long
 while—
 A vigil wearisome.

He dreamed, and his passion ebbed away
 In quest of another's bride,
 And he heard them speak of a wedding day,
 And another by her side ;
 So he closed his heavy laden eyes
 And sought for love in sleep . . .
 And she learned at length his love to prize,
 And learned, unloved, to weep.



Song.

To Joan—the long farewell.

“There is a garden in her face,
 Where roses and white lilies blow,”
 Weaving a coronal of grace
 In threads of fire and snow.

So fine the wonder-silk is spun,
 So softly blended and so true,
 The cream-white lingers half begun
 To bid the crimson through.

Come eventide or dewy morn,
 The rose-white flow’rets blush and peep
 Like some fond infant that is borne
 To fairy-land asleep.

There is an echo in her smile
 Of footfalls on a road untrod,
 That unresisting seems the while
 A stepping-stone to God.

And ever, ever, in the gloom,
And through the fetterdom of night,
The rose-buds break in crimson bloom,
The lily flowers in white.

And ever, ever, in her face
The roses and the lilies blow,
Weaving a coronal of grace
In threads of fire and snow.



Song.

A white rose or a red one,
 Which will you have from me ?
 White for a lover's token,
 Red for a lover's fee.

The white for a lover's token
 I give you e'er we part,
 The sweetest of all emblems,
 An ever constant heart.

The red for a lover's fee, dear,
 I give for a moment's bliss,
 The surest of all pleasures
 A pure and heart-sealed kiss.

* * * *

O give me the lover's token,
 O give me the lover's fee,
 To crush to my throbbing bosom
 Till you return to me.

In Argument.

“Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum.”

I cannot stoop to bandy words to-night,
 For life is all too short and strife too long,
 Since neither of us deem the other right,
 Then both of us are wrong.

What matter if I see the world, my dear,
 Not as you see it, but in other guise,
 As dim and mist-clad, where you see it clear—
 I still believe my eyes.

What matter if you tread a path of ease
 And self-indulgence through the life-long day,
 'Tis not for me to name the penalties,
 I can but point the way.

What matter if I live as you may think
 A round of bitterness and blank despair,
 'Twas I alone that stood upon life's brink
 And wove my fate-cloud there.

What matter if our gods are not the same,
What matter if our thoughts are wide apart,
So that we keep a pure, untarnished name
And read each other's heart ?

Then let us jog our sev'ral ways along,
And face undaunted the Eternal night ;
For should it be that neither, dear, is wrong,
Then both of us are right.



Song.

A little thing was Death
When my love died,
She drew her latest breath
As though she sighed ;
With rapt, unflinching eyes
Her spirit passed
Into the Paradise
She craved, at last.

The kindly arm of Death
In his embrace
Smothered her fluttering breath
And blanched her face.
A little thing it seemed
When my love died,
Almost I thought she dreamed
Still, by my side.

The Dying Year.

Across the field I saw her go,
 A flash of colour in the snow,
 So mournfully, so wearily,
 So slow.

The twilight like a robe around
 Shrouded the white clad virgin ground,
 No festal bell awoke the spell,
 No sound.

When through the silence rose a cry :
 “ The Year is flying—let it fly
 And through the cold, speed forth the Old
 To die.”

* * * . *

At midnight in the snow she lay,
 Her soul fled with the break of Day,
 She who had been one year a Queen
 So gay ;

Her weary head had found a rest
 Where snowflakes fell upon her breast,
 The while her bier the stars, so clear,
 Caressed.

* * * . *

And while the world around me slept
 I hid my face and wept.

Drunk with the Wine of Life.

They found him on the mountain side
 Piping a song so clear,
 The homing birds at eventide
 Poised in the air to hear.

And O the melody was such,
 The sweetness of his lay,
 Seemed like the Master-poet's touch
 To hold the world in sway.

They twined the myrtle in his hair,
 The bay-leaves round his brow,
 And left him as they found him there,
 But crowned and worshipped now ;

While ever as he touched his lyre,
 Bidding the music swell,
 It seemed as though some hidden fire
 Rose to his touch and fell . . .

“ And have I lived,” he cried, “ in vain,
 And drunk for this life's wine ;
 Untwist the myrtle leaves again
 And crown my brow with vine.”

Sunset.

I stood athwart the heavens and
the earth
And watched the sun majestic sink
to rest ;
Radiant with flame his light suffused
the West,
Then headlong down he plunged to seek
rebirth.

Song.

When I shall die, my dear,
I shall make the sea my grave,
I ask no better bier
Than the crest of a breaking wave.

I shall find in my ocean bed
The things I have learned to love,
I shall rest my weary head
And gaze at the ships above.

Oh, bos'un's pipes will sound
Faint through the waste of sea,
And men shall muster round
And in whispers talk of me :

But I shall lie awhile,
Till a shriller pipe shall blow,
When the Master with a smile
Summons the " Watch below."

L'Envoi.

Long, I afar have worshipped Fame
And silently adored :
My birthright, but a father's name,
A poet's pen my sword.

What matter if the sweets be sour ?
What if the strife be long ?
The man is proven by the hour,
The singer by his song.





**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles**

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

PR Cruttwell -
6005 Sea songs
C8925s

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 497 180 0

PR
6005
C8925s

